

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 EB-11 COME-00 SIL-01 LAB-06 OMB-01 RSR-01

TRSE-00 /135 W

----- 068205

R 301755 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8811

INFO AMEMBASSY TELAVIV

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E. O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PLAB

SUBJ: VISIT TO PARIS BY HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL YITZHAK
BEN AHARON

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

REF: TEL AVIV 2158 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL BEN AHARON VISITED
PARIS MARCH 24-26 TO ATTEND CONFERENCE OF PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM. IN
ADDITION HE MADE CALLS ON THREE MAJOR TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS, FO,
CFDT AND CGT, AND SAW SOCIALIST LEADER MITTERRAND. MOST NOTE-
WORTHY FEATURE OF VISIT WAS FIRST CONTACT BETWEEN HISTADRUT AND FRENCH

COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS IN TWENTY YEARS. NO NEW IDEAS ON MIDDLE EAST
EMERGED, ALTHOUGH BEN AHARON SUGGESTED DESIRABILITY OF CONTACT BETWEEN

ARAB AND ISRAELI UNION LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

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2. YITZHAK BEN AHARON, HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL, VISITED PARIS MARCH 24-26. HE AND ISRAELI AMBASSADOR LUNCHEDED WITH SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER MITTERRAND MARCH 24. BEN AHARON MET MITTERRAND AGAIN MARCH 26 FOR A " BROAD TOUR D' HORIZON OF THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALISM IN FRANCE AND IN EUROPE".

3. ON MARCH 25 BEN AHARON MET WITH FORCE OUVRIERE LEADERS, WITH WHOM HE REPORTEDLY FOUND A COMPLETE IDENTITY OF VIEWS WITH RESPECT TO FREE TRADE UNIONISM. IN A MEETING WITH THE PRESS LATER THAT DAY, BEN AHARON EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO MEET WITH ARAB TRADE UNIONISTS, OBSERVING THAT THE FRENCH UNIONS MIGHT AID HIM IN THIS PURPOSE AND NOTING THAT THIS WAS THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO HOPED FOR PEACE. IF GOVERNMENTS WERE UNABLE TO CONCLUDE A PEACE, HE SAID, PERHAPS TRADE UNIONISTS COULD SHOW THEM THE WAY. HE SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF ISRAELI OCCUPIED TERRITORY COULD NOT BE PRE-CONDITION TO THE OPENING OF TALKS AND THAT THE ONLY REAL QUESTION WAS WHETHER THE ARAB STATES WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT ISRAEL AS A PERMANENT NEIGHBOR.

4. AFP FOLLOWING DAY CARRIED STORY FROM CAIRO COMMENTING ON BEN AHARON'S REMARKS AND QUOTING ARAB TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION PRESIDENT, DR. TAYEB LAHDEIRI TO EFFECT ARAB- ISRAEL QUESTION WAS POLITICAL RATHER THAN TRADE UNION MATTER, A QUESTION OF OPPRESSORS AND OPPRESSED. ARAB TRADE UNIONISTS, SAID LAHDEIRI, ARE INTERESTED PRINCIPALLY IN THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE, AND OF PALESTINIAN WORKERS IN ISRAEL. BEFORE THINKING OF ANY CONTACT, TRADE UNIONISTS MUST CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND OF THE ARAB POPULATIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, POPULATIONS OPPRESSED BY OCCUPYING FORCES.

5. ON MARCH 26 BEN AHARON MET WITH CFDT AND CGT LEADERS, INCLUDING CGT NUMBER TWO MAN KRASUCKI (SEC. GEN. SEGUY WAS ON VISIT TO HANOI). THE CGT PRESS RELEASE REPORTING THE VISIT NOTED THAT BEN AHARON HAD BEEN RECEIVED AT HIS OWN REQUEST AND RESTATED CGT POLICY ON ARAB- ISRAELI QUESTION: THE RIGHT TO EXIST OF ALL COUNTRIES (INCLUDING ISRAEL) IN THE MIDDLE EAST; EVACUATION OF ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORY; RESPECT FOR THE RIGHT OF ARAB PEOPLES TO FREE DISPOSITION OF THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES AND TO A FREE CHOICE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS. THE CGT ALSO CALLED FOR A SOLUTION FOR " THE PROBLEM OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" AND REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE UN RESOLUTION OF NOVEMBER 19 67.

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6. ACCORDING TO ISRAELI EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER AMIR, BEN AHARON' S PRINCIPAL PURPOSE IN COMING TO PARIS WAS TO ATTEND CONFERENCE OF PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM WHICH TOOK PLACE MARCH 24-25. BEN AHARON TOOK ADVANTAGE OF VISIT TO MEET WITH TRADE UNION COUNTERPARTS AND SOCIALIST PARTY OFFICIALS. AMIR SAID THAT BEN AHARON HAD BEEN TRYING TO ARRANGE MEETING WITH CGT LEADERSHIP FOR SOME TIME AND THAT MEETING WAS FIRST FORMAL CONTACT BETWEEN HISTADRUT AND CGT IN TWENTY YEARS. CGT IN PAST HAD ALWAYS REFUSED MEETING, BUT AGREED AFTER BEN AHARON CAME OUT WITH HIS RECENT VIEWS ON WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IN GENERAL, ISRAELI EMBASSY TAKING LINE THAT VISIT WAS NOT OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE. BEN AHARON SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN REMARKABLY DISCREET IN HIS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENTS . PRESS SOURCES TELL US HE DECLINED TO REITERATE PUBLICLY HIS POSITION ON UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL. AT MEETING OF PROGRESSIVE JEWS HE TOOK ISSUE WITH THOSE WHO CRITICIZE ISRAELI EXTERNAL POLICIES, WARNING AUDIENCE AGAINST " ABUSIVE GENERALIZATIONS, HASTY CONCLUSIONS AND EXCESSIVE CRITICISMS" OF ISRAELI WHICH HE POINTED OUT, WAS A PROFOUNDLY DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE BEN AHARON SAW NO ONE IN GOVERNMENT PARTIES, AND HE DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE PUT FORWARD ANY NEW PROPOSALS FOR SETTLEMENT OF ARAB ISRAELI DISPUTE, BEYOND IDEA OF CONTACT BETWEEN ARAB AND ISRAELI TRADE UNIONISTS.

DECONTROL FOLLOWING 3/30/74.

IRWIN

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